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TAGS: [IR](#) [IZ](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: VP ABDEL MEHDI AND AMBASSADOR DISCUSS  
DEBAATHIFICATION, CONSTITUTIONAL REIVEW, IRAN

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S) Summary: In a May 15 meeting, Vice President Adel Abdel Mehdi told the Ambassador that he hoped to have a revised draft of a deBaathification reform law to the Presidency Council early next week. He confirmed that he and Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi had agreed on the principles for revision to the text; the next steps were for Abdel Mehdi to make the revisions and consult within the Shi'a coalition.

Abdel Mehdi reported that the constitutional review process was proceeding well but that Masoud Barzani would have to be convinced of proposals on Kirkuk and on placing water, ports, and customs under the authority of the central government. Agreeing with the Ambassador that Iran's negative actions in Iraq ran counter to Iranian interests and Iran's assurances, Abdel Mehdi offered his opinion that deep-seated anti-Americanism was blocking Iran's leaders from a more flexible and calculated political approach. End summary.

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DeBaathification: Goal for a Draft Next Week  
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12. (C) Noting that he had heard from al-Hashemi that the two Vice Presidents had reached an understanding on revisions to the deBaathification draft (reftel), the Ambassador asked Abdel Mehdi what the next steps were. Abdel Mehdi said that the principles were agreed and that he needed to revise the text based on these principles. He would then consult with the Shi'a Coalition to ensure it was "defensible" as a submission from the Presidency Council. Abdel Mehdi noted that the Shi'a Coalition had already discussed these issues "at a certain level," explaining that the key consideration was preventing a large-scale return of Baathists to government positions, through which they might be able to take over state institutions. As long as "Najaf is not hostile and Maliki supports it" Abdel Mehdi continued, he felt confident in gaining the support of most of the Shi'a Coalition. The Ambassador told Abdel Mehdi that Prime Minister Maliki was following the draft's evolution and asked when he thought the Presidency Council would have a proposal to submit to the Council of Representatives. Abdel Mehdi said that he hoped to present a proposal to the Presidency Council early in the week of May 27.

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Constitutional Review: "We Need Irbil"  
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13. (C) Abdel Mehdi told the Ambassador that he understood from Humam Hamoudi that the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) was making strong progress on key issues. It was poised to recommend that ports, water, and customs fall under the authorities of the central government rather than regional governments; that oil and gas resources be "defined by themselves with no reference to whether the central or regional governments control them," thus allowing the

hydrocarbon law to make that determination; and that Kirkuk be given special status as its own region for four years, during which time the borders would be defined and after which time its citizens could choose whether to join another region (e.g., Kurdistan). "As with the hydrocarbon law," Abdel Mehdi told the Ambassador, "the issue is Masoud (Barzani) - we need Irbil." The Ambassador replied that he had raised the hydrocarbon law with Masoud and Nechirvan and would press them as well on constitutional review issues.

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Kirkuk: Origins of a Proposal  
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14. (C) The Ambassador asked Abdel Mehdi who developed the proposal on Kirkuk. Though Abdel Mehdi at first had said it was the United Nations, he then said that SCIRI developed the proposal after he had discussed the general idea with the Turks. SCIRI CoR member Mohammed Taqi al-Mawla then sought and received President Talabani's support for the proposal, Abdel Mehdi continued. "Then he went to Nechirvan, who told him to go to Masoud. He said that Masoud listened but did not comment." SCIRI then submitted the proposal to the CRC, Abdel Mehdi said. Abdel Mehdi argued that although the Kurds would instinctively be against postponing implementation of article 140, the solution outlined above would be in their interests. "They would lose nothing. They are the majority, so they would have the upper hand (in determining Kirkuk's future even four years later)." The Ambassador agreed with Abdel Mehdi that the Kurds would benefit from this solution because problems might arise if they pushed too hard at this time.

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"Anti-Americanism" Behind Iran's Paradoxical Behavior in Iraq

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15. (S) Turning to Iran after a brief mention of security in Basrah, Abdel Mehdi observed that President Ahmedinajd's statements in Oman were "very bad" and that his actions were worrying Rafsanjani and even elements in the IRGC. Seemingly referring to Iran's insistence on its position on the nuclear issue, Abdel Mehdi drew a parallel to the Iran-Iraq war, noting that Iran had insisted on continuing the war only to discover when it stopped the war that it was all the better off for stopping it. Abdel Mehdi said he had asked Suleimani whether he thought the U.S. should leave Iraq, and Suleimani had told him "no." He claimed that Khamenai characterized the current GOI "as the best government for Shi'a in Iraq for 1000 years." He said he had asked Iranian leaders whether they would be against a successful Iraq if it meant a success for the U.S. at the same time, and that they had said "no." Asked by the Ambassador why the Iranians actions in Iraq ran counter to these statements and seemingly to Iran's own interests, Abdel Mehdi replied, "anti-Americanism." Iranian leaders were so fixated on the belief that the U.S. was the enemy, Abdel Mehdi maintained, that they were unable to take rational political calculations into account. The Ambassador and Abdel Mehdi agreed on the dangers of this approach.

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